	<h1 style="text-align: center;">POLICY AND PROCEDURE</h1> <h2 style="text-align: center;">MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE</h2>	<b>No. 23-11</b>
	<b>COMMAND COMPETENCIES FOR COMMAND LEVEL AND UNIT LEVEL OFFICERS OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>

### MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE POLICY

### COMMAND COMPETENCIES FOR COMMAND LEVEL AND UNIT LEVEL OFFICERS OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Issued by: Fire Chief

Policy No. 23-11

Authority: Montgomery County Code Section 21-2. (d)(4)

Effective Date:


#### **SUMMARY:**

This Policy is the second module completing the MCFRS *Certification Standards for Training, Experience, and Credentialing Requirements* Executive Regulation #18-05AM, and requires all MCFRS command officers and unit officers to successfully complete a periodic command competency evaluation. The evaluations will be based on the attainment of operational experience and performance assessed through the *Fire/Rescue Command Benchmarks for Certified Unit and Chief Officers*; and the knowledge, skills, and abilities *Command Competencies KSAs Chart* attached to this Policy. These evaluations will be administered to MCFRS personnel at four officer levels: EMS Command and Unit Officers; Fire/Rescue Unit Officers; First Level Fire/Rescue Command Officers; and Duty Operations Command Officers.

All evaluations will test operational competencies derived from applicable: Executive Regulations; FRC Executive Regulations; MCFRS Policies and Procedures; Fire Chief's Policies and Orders; the MCFRS Communications Manual; and knowledge and performance skills acquired in required training courses that are prerequisite classes for the rank held by the officer being tested.

#### **ADDRESS:**

Submit all comments pertaining to the proposed policy to Beth Feldman, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland 20850, by **DATE**. Comments may be emailed to [beth.feldman@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:beth.feldman@montgomerycountymd.gov)


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**STAFF:** For additional information, please call Division Chief Alan Hinde at 240-777-2466.

**Section 1. Purpose:** to ensure that all MCFRS Command Officers and Unit Officers are competent in performing their assigned responsibilities.


### Section 2. Definitions.

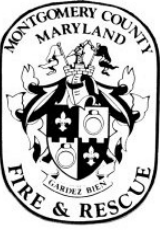
- a. **Assistant Chief**. A County Merit System employee who has been promoted through a competitive evaluation process to the rank of Assistant Chief, and is responsible for a major organizational program area.
- b. **Career (employee)**. A Merit System employee of Montgomery County in the fire/rescue occupational series, or an employee of a local fire and rescue department, who provides firefighting, rescue, or emergency medical service.
- c. **Certified Chief Officer**. An MCFRS officer who is certified at the IECS rank of Battalion Chief or above by the Fire Chief or designee, by having met the training and experience requirements identified in the *Certification Standards for Training, Experience, and Credentialing Requirements*, Executive Regulation #18-05AM.
- d. **Command Competency Evaluation Panel**. A board consisting of career and volunteer command officers each of who have a minimum of 5 years of experience in commanding incidents within MCFRS. The panel's members will be selected by the MCFRS Operations Division Chief and the Volunteer Services Division Chief.
- e. **Division Chief**. An individual who meets the requirements for the position of certified Chief Officer, and is appointed by the Executive or promoted by the Fire Chief to this position.
- f. **Fire Chief**. The Fire Chief is appointed by the County Executive under Section 21-3 of the County Code, and serves as the Director of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service.
- g. **Firefighter III- Restricted**. An individual who has met the training standards and is certified as a Firefighter III, but has chosen not to fulfill the unit officer position, or has failed to achieve the command competencies for this rank, and is therefore not permitted to perform as a unit officer. However, he/she may perform all other duties permitted

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under the Firefighter III level in the Core Training and Certification Standards.

- h. **First-Level Command Officer.** An MCFRS certified chief officer who is expected to manage incidents as large in scale as a second alarm fire incident, up to a Mass Casualty Incident affecting as many as 15 victims, and localized hazmat incidents, without immediate supervision.
- i. **Integrated Emergency Command Structure (IECS).** The operational chain-of-command and rank structure that integrates all fire and rescue services personnel, both career and volunteer, who have met the applicable training and experience, certification, and credentialing requirements for a specific rank.
- j. **Laboratory Command Evaluation.** Classroom simulation of a fire or all-hazards incident to which MCFRS typically responds. All command officers and unit officers must role-play as the officer in charge of the incident, making initial command decisions that are evaluated by at least two evaluators of the Command Competencies Evaluation Panel
- k. **Local Fire and Rescue Department (LFRD) Fire/Rescue Chief).** The senior operational chief officer of an LFRD, as certified and established in the IECS chain of command.
- l. **Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS).** A department of County government, and a public-private partnership as well, consisting of a Division of Volunteer Services, a Division of Fire and Rescue Operations, and other divisions necessary for effective management and administration, as defined in County Code Section 21.
- m. **Operational.** Activities involved in the planning and preparation for, and control of, any firefighting, rescue, emergency medical service, hazardous materials, disaster mitigation, special operations, or other emergency incident.
- n. **Operational Benchmarks.** A series of predetermined objectives established by the Division Chief of Operations that are used to manage an emergency operation in a predictable direction. These benchmarks (Appendix B.) are used as one tool to evaluate operational proficiency.
- o. **Operational Officers.** Rank levels including IECS-certified: Volunteer

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	<p>Firefighter/Rescuer III (optional, required only if unit officer-qualified); Master Firefighter/Rescuer, Lieutenants, Captains, Battalion Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, LFRD Chiefs, Division Chiefs and Fire Chief.</p> <p>p. <b><u>Personnel</u></b>. For purposes of this Policy, all on-duty firefighter/rescuer and emergency medical service personnel, including volunteers who are operational members of the Local Fire and Rescue Departments, and MCFRS career Merit System operational employees.</p> <p>q. <b><u>Provisional Status</u></b>. Restricted operational status of a unit officer or command officer who has failed to achieve the command competencies for the rank held in the MCFRS IECS. This individual will be placed in provisional status, restricting him/her from commanding an emergency incident until he/she has received remedial training, has successfully completed command competency re-evaluation at the MCFRTA, and has recertified in his/her current MCFRS rank. Remedial training and re-evaluation must occur within 180 days after being placed in provisional status. At the command level, these individuals must not participate in IECS activities, except as approved by the Fire Chief.</p> <p>r. <b><u>Remedial Training</u></b>. Corrective training provided by MCFRTA instructors, peers, or superior officers, to an individual who has failed to successfully complete one or more objectives/benchmarks of the command competency evaluation process. The training is provided during on-duty hours for career personnel, and by appointment for volunteer personnel.</p> <p>s. <b><u>Second Level Command Officer (Duty Operations Chief)</u></b>. A command officer at the rank of Assistant Chief or higher who has successfully completed the command competency for Second Level Command Officer, and has been interviewed and appointed by the Fire Chief. This individual is responsible for operational oversight of all MCFRS operations during a specific time period/shift.</p> <p>t. <b><u>Unit Officer</u></b>. The officer in charge of a specific fire, rescue, or EMS unit. To be a unit officer on fire apparatus, personnel must be certified as a Firefighter/Rescuer III or higher rank. For the purpose of this policy, EMS-only Lieutenants and higher are included.</p> <p>u. <b><u>Volunteer</u></b>. An individual who, without salary, performs firefighting, rescue, or emergency medical services with a local fire and rescue department, or with the Division</p>	


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of Volunteer Services.

**Section 3. Applicability.** This Policy was developed in cooperation with all components of the **MCFRS**, including the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1664, and the Local Fire and Rescue Departments. It applies to all **Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service** command and **unit officers**.

#### **Section 4. Policy.**

- a. It is the policy of the **Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service** to evaluate the command competency of **MCFRS operational officers** at least once during a period not to exceed 12 months. This evaluation program is required to ensure that **operational officers** maintain proficient command skills to provide safe and efficient operations on the scene of emergency incidents. **Personnel** who fail to meet the minimum requirements of this program will not be permitted to function as a **unit officer** or as a command officer on the IECS list.
- b. There are three levels of **operational officer Command Competency Evaluations**:
  1. **Unit officer**: Captain, Lieutenant, Master Firefighter/Rescuer, and Firefighter/Rescuer III (optional at the FFIII level), EMS Provider Captain, EMS Provider Lieutenant, Master EMS Provider, EMS Provider III.
  2. **First Level Command Officers**: All **MCFRS** command officers qualified in the **IECS** as a Certified Command Officer.
  3. **Second Level Duty Operations Chiefs**: **MCFRS** command officers qualified as an Assistant Chief or higher in the **IECS** and are selected by the **Fire Chief** to serve in this position.
- c. Components of the **operational officer** command competencies include:
  1. annual written assessment of overall knowledge of **MCFRS** Standard Operating Procedures, MCFRS policies, and Executive Regulations;
  2. annual field evaluations of command-level officers by a superior command-level officer during an incident, using the **MCFRS** command officer benchmark, as appropriate;

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3. periodic evaluations of **unit officers** by command level officers;
4. annual **laboratory command evaluation** of all **operational officers** in a solo or group exercise, evaluated by at least two members of the **command competencies evaluation panel**;
5. continuous evaluation by a Duty Operations Chief on incidents using the **MCFRS Command Officer Benchmarks**; and
6. **remedial training** to resolve a **unit officer** or command officer's demonstrated performance deficiencies, based upon applicable policies and procedures that are not followed or implemented; or an unsuccessful competency evaluation.

#### Sec. 5. Procedures and Responsibilities.

##### a. MCFRS Operational Officers

1. **MCFRS IECS operational officers** must continually refresh and enhance their knowledge of emergency response and command issues, and prepare for a periodic **command competency evaluation**, as described in this policy.
2. Each **operational officer** must successfully complete the competency evaluation level for the rank at which they are listed on the **IECS**. Each evaluation includes a distance learning knowledge test, as well as a **laboratory command evaluation** and field evaluation. These requirements are based upon FRC Executive Regulations; **MCFRS Policies and Procedures**; **Fire Chief's Directives and Orders**; the **MCFRS Communications Manual**; and knowledge and performance skills acquired in training courses that were prerequisites for the **operational officer's IECS** rank level being evaluated.
3. An **operational officer** who fails to achieve a successful result in the annual **command competency evaluation** will be placed in the **IECS provisional status** until he/she has completed **remedial training**, and has successfully completed the **command competency evaluation**. The single exception to meeting this requirement is an individual at the rank of Volunteer Firefighter III, who will be restricted from riding in the **unit officer** position until successful completion of **remedial training** and the **command competency evaluation**.




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4. All **operational** command officers will undergo annual field evaluations, with comments provided by LFRD Chiefs, Duty Operations Chiefs, and/or Division Chiefs during a real operational incident, using the operational benchmarks (Appendix B.) for the highest level of command for which the **operational officer** is certified.

5. All **unit officers**, except EMS Provider BLS **unit officers**, will undergo periodic field evaluations conducted by certified command level officers.

b. Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Training Academy (MCFRTA).


1. The MCFRTA must provide each **operational officer** access to the study materials enabling them to prepare for the periodic **command competency evaluations**.
2. The MCFRTA must develop a calendar scheduling command competency appointments that allows all command officers and **unit officers** to be evaluated once within a 12-month period in a laboratory setting. This appointment calendar must be available on-line, and made accessible to all **operational officers**. The scheduling of these appointments must provide for weekend and evening appointments.
3. The written knowledge evaluations related to applicable Executive Regulations, **MCFRS** Executive Regulations, SOPs, and policies must be available in an on-line format and, if requested, the written examination may be given at the MCFRTA in a classroom setting, on schedules convenient for both **career** and **volunteer operational officers**.
  - A. **Operational officers** may take the written knowledge evaluation up to three times. The MCFRTA must develop and have available at least three different versions of the written knowledge evaluation.
  - B. An **operational officer** who fails to achieve a successful outcome in the written knowledge evaluation after three attempts must undergo **remedial training**, to be documented by the Command Competency Coordinator. Upon request, the Command Competency Coordinator will provide the **operational officer** with the needed study guide for the identified areas of

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deficiency.

4. The practical and **laboratory command evaluation** portions of the command competency evaluations will be held at the MCFRTA on schedules convenient to both **volunteer** and **career** command officers by appointment. These **laboratory command evaluations** will include mock all-hazard incidents that **MCFRS unit officers** and command officers could be challenged with solving.
5. The MCFRTA will provide a *Command Officer Professional Development and Improvement (COPDI)* program that supports the evaluation process and focuses on the challenges facing **operational officers** in a command role. The MCFRTA will assign a Command Competency Coordinator to administer scheduling and maintain timely record-keeping for the program.
6. **Remedial Training.** The MCFRTA must provide one-on-one **remedial training** to all **personnel** who fail to achieve a successful outcome in the command competency process. **Remedial training** will be coordinated and documented by the Command Competency Coordinator. A superior or peer officer may also conduct **remedial training** using materials provided by the MCFRTA.
  - A. **Remedial training** will focus on the specific issue or SOP(s) in which the officer failed to achieve an acceptable performance rating. When the **remedial training** has been completed, the officer will be re-evaluated in the practical laboratory setting. If the re-evaluation results in a successful outcome, the officer will be reinstated to his/her previous fully-functional rank level on the **IECS** by the appropriate **Division Chief**.
  - B. Documentation of the successful completion of the **remedial training**, including the hours and dates the training was given, and the name and rank of the remedial instructor, must be forwarded to the Command Competency Coordinator.
  - C. If the second **command competency evaluation** is unsuccessful, a second instructor will be assigned to work with the **operational officer** as a mentor for a period of up to 6 months.
    - i. If the second period of **remedial training** also results in a failed evaluation, the command officer will be demoted to the **IECS** rank of



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Captain, and must successfully complete the unit officer Command Competency Evaluation.

- ii If the officer fails to successfully complete the unit officer evaluation, that officer will be demoted to the IECS rank of Firefighter/Rescuer III, and will be restricted from unit officer status. The demotion will last for one year, at which time an opportunity to re-test will be offered.

- 7. The MCFRTA will place the results of the periodic **command competency evaluation** in each officer's PSTA transcript.

- c. **Conflict Resolution.** A Conflict Resolution process will be provided if there is a disagreement with the outcome of the Command Competencies **Laboratory Command Evaluation**. Conflict Resolution will be heard by a panel comprising the Operations Division Chief, Volunteer Services Division Chief, and the Assistant Chief for Training. This panel will either agree or disagree with the findings of the evaluators, and will provide specific information on their decision. If the evaluators are overturned, the individual being evaluated is considered to have passed the evaluation.


**Section 6. Implementation and Enforcement.** The Fire Chief is the implementation and enforcement authority for all policies and regulations of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service.

**Section 7. Effective Date.** This policy is effective on

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas W. Carr, Jr., Chief  
Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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<b>Attachments:</b>  <b>COMMAND COMPETENCIES KSA'S CHART</b>  <b>FIRE/RESCUE COMMAND BENCHMARKS FOR CERTIFIED UNIT AND CHIEF OFFICERS</b>		